CAPITAL AND NATION

How Their Relations Were Finally Adjusted.

ORGANIC ACT OF 1878

YEARS OF NEGLECT THREATENED LOCAL BANKRUPTCY.

Great Upvising of Washingtonians Resulted in Tardy Congres-

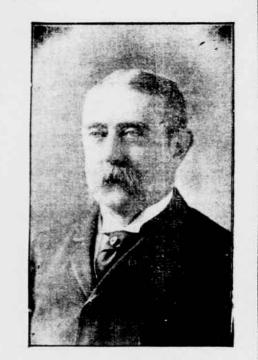
sional Action.

the county, was changed February 21, 1871,

and in lieu thereof there was established a

new form of government for the District

The form of government which had existed from the year 1802, under a mayor, alderman and council, for the city of Washington, under a similar form of government for Georgetown, and under a levy court for



Mr. Lewis J. Davis.

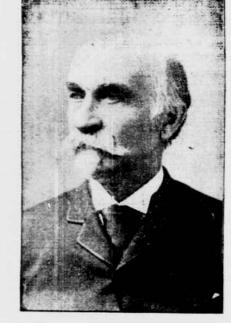
of Columbia, consisting of a governor, council and board of public works, appointed by the President of the United States and confirmed by the United States Senate. and a house of delegates, elected by the

One of the first acts of the legislative assembly was passed August 23, 1871, entitled an act prescribing the duties of certain officers for the District of Columbia, and fixing their compensation. This was a very comprehensive act, going into details of taxation, of the duties of officers of the local administration and their remuneration, and of the application of the sums collected to the various expenses of the District government.

The board of public works was only so far referred to in this legislation, as in the act of August 10, 1871, entitled "An act prescribing the mode of assessments for special improvements and providing for the collection thereof."

A Debt Fixed in 1872.

In the assembly on January 19, 1872, an act was passed for the payment of the debts of the corporation of Washington, and a similar act, June 20, 1872, for the payment of the debts of the levy court, and for the payment of the debts of the

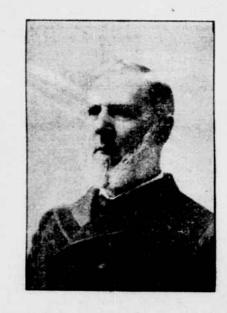


Judge W. S. Cox.

corporation of Georgetown, Commissioners of the sinking fund, by an act passed at the same time, were authorized to settle all such claims and directed and empowered to issue registered or coupon bonds of the city of Washington to an amount suffiedent to cover said debts of the city of Washington not then funded. This act pro-vided that the aggregate debt of the District should not exceed the sum of ten

million dollars.
On July 11, 1871, the legislative assembly cassed an act authorizing the issue of 4,000,000 in bonds, in accordance with a clan of improvement submitted to said egislature by the board of public works. An act authorizing an additional issue of the same amount of bonds was passed August 19, 1871; but, on submitting the question to vote of the people, only one loan \$4,000,000 was authorized.
On June 23, 1873, a further authorization

On June 23, 1873, a further authorization of bonds was made to cover the discount allowed on the negotiation of the \$4,000,000



Mr. Geo. M. Oyster.

lean. The bonded debt of the District ex-isting December 31, 1873, was, as stated by the controller, \$5,527,850; the assessed value of real estate in the entire District, as stat-id by the superintendent of assessments, in 1874. was \$96,433,672.

An Embarrassing Situation.

The following extract from an opinion given by Mr. Caleb Cushing will indicate the embarrassing condition into which the congress inserted in the act, and there was inscribed on the bonds, the following distributing federal patronage through the several states has resulted in bringing to this city large numbers of persons, male

1873, to follow the method of reimbursement instead of anticipatory appropriations, and in not making at the same time any appropriations for future work, although well knowing that such work must and would be done-Congress would seem to have been conscious of the impracticability

Mr. B. H. Warner.

of acting in this matter by previous appropriation, without having first fixed by general law the proportion of cost of im-provement chargeable to individual proprietors and the proportion chargeable to the

This uncertain condition as to the propor-tionate liability for the expenses of the District as between Congress and its citizens is further exemplified by the heavy expenditure of the District government in other branches of administration. In December, 1873, the superintendent of public schools writes: "It is clearly evident that the city cannot sustain the burden of taxation required to carry on our present system of public schools. For the purpose of ascertaining what proportion of the parents or guardians of pupils in our schools are tax-payers here. I recently procured a complete list from the registers of our schools. The list contained the names of 246 parents or

guardians of pupils, and of this number only 60, or 26.80 per cent, were taxpayers. "The list might be extended to other ources of expenditure by the government of the District for police, board of health, Interest, etc., showing how, in the event of the financial burdens resting upon the District not being relieved by permanent law assuming on the yart of the general government a just proportion of the District's liabilities, it must inevitably result in the bankruptcy of this community.

The Commissionership Government. The system of government was again changed, June 20, 1874, continuing, however, the sinking commissioners, but placing the

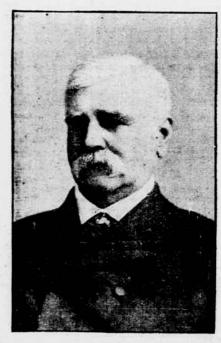


Mr. J. W. Thompson.

government in the hands of three Commissioners instead of the governor, council, board of public works and the legislative assembly. This act also directed the issue of 8.65 bonds, to take up the outstanding certificates of the board of audit issued for certificates of the board of public works for improvements made, and in the act pledging the United States "by proportionate appropriations and by causing to be levied such taxes as would do so" to provide the payment of interest on said bonds and their payment at maturity. By the end of 1877 the funded debt of the District of Columbia was \$22,098,650.

Growth of Indebtedness.

The debts so far referred to were debts of the old corporation of Washington and the four-million loan authorized by the legislature; meantime the board of public works, which was not under the control of the legislature, had incurred a large debt outside of the authorized expenditure of the proceeds of the four-million loan. The rapid growth of this indebtedness and the lack of provision for meeting the same alarmed the citizens of the District, and led to an



Colonel J. G. Berret.

appeal to Congress and an investigation After thorough inquiry and investigation, the acts of the board as to the creation of the debt were disapproved, and the powers which had been exercised by the members thereof thansferred to the three Commissioners authorized to be appointed under act of June 20, 1874. There was at this time left uncollected a vast amount of spe-cial taxes and an undetermined amount of District debt incurred by the board of pub-lic works. This last sum was evidenced by certificates of the treasurer of the board and other claims growing out of the execu-tion of contracts, and it was provided that all such claims should be submitted to a board of audit, composed of the two conboard of audit, composed of the two controllers of the treasury, which should issue certificates for the amounts found due on the same, and in the act of June 20, 1874, the commissioners of the sinking fund were directed to issue bonds of the District bearing interest at 3.65 per cent per annum and having fifty years to run and to exchange said bonds for the certificates previously authorized. The amount of such bonds is sued to November, 1878, was \$13,743,250, and the total District debt \$22,122,941.

In authorizing the issue of the 3.65 bonds.

Congress inserted in the act, and there was inscribed on the bonds.

propriations, and by causing to be levied such taxes as will do so, provide for the payment of interest as it falls due, and a sinking fund that would provide for the payment of the principal at maturity."

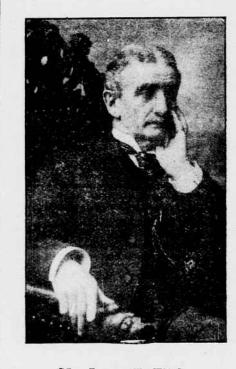
This act was passed June 20, 1874, but just the passage of the act approved by

until the passage of the act approved by the President June 11, 1878, this proportion was never fixed by the government, nor any steps taken to extend aid to the credit and resources of the District, except by partial and spasmodic appropriations.

To quote from a minority report submitted to the Senate in 1877: "At the end of six years only of a government irresponsible to the people the public debt amounts a great nation. to \$25,000,000-more than one-fourth of the assessed value of the property of the District. Meanwhile \$13,000,000 has been assessed as special taxes on the property of the citizens, ten millions on the same as general taxes, and Congress had appropriated six million dollars. Deducting the original indebtedness, we find the enormous sum of fifty million dollars, as the net ex-penditure of six years of government by officers appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate. Of this vast sum, not less than forty millions are chargeable to improvements."

A Memorial to Congress.

In October, 1877, the writer, then president of the board of sinking fund commissioners, realizing the desperate condition in which the finances of the District were placed, and the necessity of obtaining relief from Congress by a definite assumption by that body of its obligations toward the debt of this community, prepared the fol-

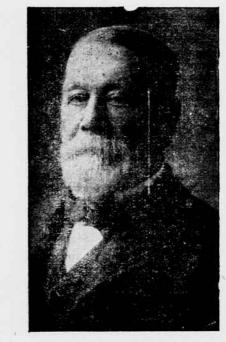


Mr. James E. Fitch.

lowing petition, or memorial, to be submitted to Congress: To the Honorable Senate and House of

Representatives: "The undersigned citizens and taxpayers of the District of Columbia respectfully represent that they are under the exclusive jurisdiction of your honorable bodies, and have at this time no representative therein; they, therefore, avail themselves of the

right of petition, and beg your favorable consideration of the following request: "The faith of the government was, by act of Congress of June 24, 1874, pledged to pro-portional appropriations toward the ex-penses of the District. Such proportion has not yet been determined or appropriations cent of the expenses. In view of the fact that the streets and avenues are the prop-erty of the United States (see decision of the Supreme Court in the case of Van Ness) of the exemption from taxation of all government property, of the large ex-pense entailed upon our taxpayers in providing public school accommodations for



Mr. W. R. Smith.

the children of non-residents and non-tax-payers and of the exhaustion we are now laboring under from our efforts to improve laboring under from our efforts to improve and beautify the national capital, we ven-ture to ask that the government's propor-tion of the expense be fixed at 50 per cent, and necessary legislation provided there-

Potomac River's Needs. "The condition of the Potomac river, we humbly represent, now requires immediate attention, both for the reservation of commerce and the health of the resident population, in which view the question becomes a national one, depending thereupon the health of officers of the United States and representatives of foreign governments stationed here. The well-established policy of

the government has been to preserve the

navigation of all important rivers and to

remove therefrom such denosits and accre-

tions as were detrimental to the public health. The Potomac river, one of the

Dr. Daniel B. Clark.

largest and most important in the country, has been overlooked until its condition has become alike dangerous to health and threatening to navigation. We therefore

fiscal affairs of the District had drifted: by pledged that it will by proportionate ap"In continuing, by the act of March 3, propriations, and by causing to be levied in and recent reductions of force have left in the different departments of the District:

| Since | Committees | District | Di in and recent reductions of force have left a large number of these persons in our city without means of support upon the charity of this community, which at this time is scarcely, if at all, able to take care of its resident poor. We beg to urge this as a strong reason for liberal appropriations in behalf of our charitable matitutions.

Interest 11,022,000.00
Police department 350,000.00
Lighting streets 160,000.00
Insun Asylum 75,000.00
Small repairs 100,000.00
Small repairs 100,000.00
Executive department 80000.00

abiding and taxpaying community, and express an earnest desire to co-operate with the representatives of the general government in making this the worthy capital of

Active Steps Taken.

This memorial was first submitted to the

inspection of Governor Dennison, the president of the board of District Commissioners, and, meeting his cordial approval, was communicated to Messrs. Crosby S. Noyes, John A. Baker, Robert C. Fox, M. W. of a committee of 100 was debated and decided upon. A meeting followed at the

from Congress legislation imperatively needed in behalf of our District, but the trouble is that 'what is everybody's business is nobody's business.' A good many, in fact, are disposed to despair of getting anything like combined, energetic action in view of the general listlessness displayed, and the disposition, on the other hand, by some to raise a mad-dog cry of interested motives against any citizens of public spirit enough to attempt to rescue the community from the slough of despond. Immunity from the slough of despond. Impelled, however, by the urgent nature of the emergency, quite a number of our citizens interested in the prosperity of the District have entered upon the thankless task industrial after consultation they appointed dicated. After consultation they appointed a committee with instructions to send out the following invitation addressed to a considerable number of prominent citizens of the District, who, it was thought, would be willing to give active co-operation for the object in view:

WASHINGTON, D. C., October 9, 1877. "'Dear Sir: You are respectfully invited to unite with certain other fellow-citizens with a view to the formation of a committee of 100 to endeavor to procure from Con-gress such legislation as will secure the objects set forth in a memorial now before the public for signatures, of which a copy is herewith submitted.

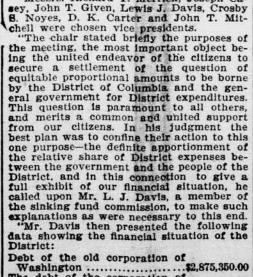
is herewith submitted.

"'Please signify your acceptance on receipt of this. Respectfully yours,
"'Committee—Lewis J. Davis, R. O. Fox,
Joseph Casey, S. V. Niles, John A. Baker,
John T. Mitchell, William M. Galt, Joseph
C. Semmes, George W. Riggs, George Taylor, Crosby S. Noyes, John Hitz, M. W.
Beveridge, John T. Given, William Dixon,
E. J. Middleton, fr.'
"The answers to this invitation have been so hearty in promising the active co-opera-

"The answers to this invitation have been so hearty in promising the active co-operation asked that there is encouragement to believe that a real working organization of zealous, energetic men can be effected in the shape of a citizens' committee of 100 or more. But one declination has been received, and that comes from Mr. Columbus wexander, who thinks he smells some 'ring jobs' in the movement. While he admits that there is much in the memorial that is very just and commendable, he thinks the reference to the improvement of the Potomac river 'may be construed to inthe Potomac river 'may be construed to in-volve a job which may result in incurring a further debt to the District and increased taxation.' This objection from Mr. Alexmade, although three committees of Congress have reported on the subject—one that the proportion should fairly be fixed at 50 per cent; a second committee reported in favor of the government's paying the entire expense of the District, and reimbursing itself to the extent of a moderate tax on the property of the citizens thereof; the last committee reported a bill involving the payment by the general government of 40 per cent of the expenses. In view of the feat mac river contemplated was to induce Congress to make such appropriation for the improvement of the river and harbor at the national capital as it makes every year for the improvement of rivers and harbors all over the country. There was not a shade of a shadow of a foundation for a suspicion that there was any 'job' in this matter. It would seem to be impossible that any man interested in the welfare of the city could be found to opnose the effort to get an apbe found to oppose the effort to get an ap-propriation from Congress to improve the navigation and abate the malarial scourge of the Potomac. But the Potomac river improvement and other matters referred to in the memorial are, as heretofore explained in this column, only incidental obects to the great paramount one set forth in the memorial of procuring from Congress the legislation fixing definitely the propor-tion it will pay toward the expenses of the District. It is so vital to the interests of the District that this matter should be settled that all other District needs and grievences can afford to wait until this is ar-

The report of the meeting thus called was printed in The Star of October 22, 1877:

A Spirited Start. "In response to personal notices sent by committee selected from among our citisens interested in the prosperity of this District, quite a large number of property holders, representing pretty fully the various local interests of the District, met at Willard's Hall Saturday night, for the purpose of securing unity of action in seeking needed legislation from Congress. Among the prominent citizens present were George W. Riggs, Lewis J. Davis, Judge J. W. Wright, Josiah Dent, S. H. Kauffmann, R. C. Fox, John A. Baker, Judge Joseph Ca-sey, Crosby S. Noyes, William Dixon, Judge Vall, Henry Semken, John Marbury, P. M. Dubant, R. W. Downman, William Petti-bone, George Oyster, C. M. Matthews, Columbus Alexander, John T. Given, William M. Shuster, J. G. Berret, Joseph L. Simms, M. Shuster, J. G. Berret, Joseph L. Simms, John E. Thompson, James H. Goddard, Samuel Bacon, S. Norment, H. A. Willard, R. S. Davis, Dr. J. B. Blake, W. R. Smith, Thomas P. Morgan, William H. Clagett, Dr. J. C. Morgan, August Kock, C. B. Church, A. T. Britton, Wm. M. Beveridge, John Pettibone, William B. Reed, John Hitz, J. C. Wilson, W. G. Metzerott, John F. Ennis, A. Ross Ray, Dr. A. Y. P. Gar-F. Ennis, A. Ross Ray, Dr. A. Y. P. Garnett, Wm. Ballantyne, Wm. M. Galt, Wm. Birney, J. E. Fitch, Horatio King, S. V. Niles, Gen. Beale, John T. Mitchell, Wm. S. Thompson, Horatio Browning, Horace Capron, John Saul, Wm. Dickson, W. J. Stephenson, B. F. Lloyd, A. L. Barker, Sayles J. Bowen, W. D. Baldwin, S. A. H. Marks, George White, John F. Cook, M. W. Galt, Z. F. Peck, Dr. Christle, J. W. Boteler, D. B. Clarke, Dr. C. B. Purvis, A. M. Clapp, I. U. Burritt, W. H. Morrison, James Worm-ley, Dr. S. C. Busey, Thomas Somerville, E. J. Middleton, jr., and R. W. Tompkins. "Mr. L. J. Davis called the meeting to order and read the notice indicating the purposes of the meeting. He nominated George W. Riggs, esq., president, and he was unanimously elected. Mr. John A. Baker was chosen for secretary and Mr. R. C. Fox as treasurer. Fox as treasurer. "Messrs. Richard T. Merrick, Joseph Casey, John T. Given, Lewis J. Davis, Crosby S. Noyes, D. K. Carter and John T. Mit-



lumbia 5,251,850.00

Total\$8,379,691.96 "This was incurred under a representative form of government for the District. The additional debt, created by agents of the government, is as follows: Debt represented by 3.65 bonds

"The following was presented as the esti- | mittee

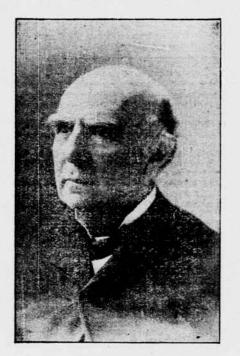
89,000.00 35,000.00 Executive department Sweeping streets Parking commission
Rents, repairs, etc.
Engineers' department
Sinking fund 15,000,00 896,000.00 200,000.00 Sundries

Total\$3,000,000.00

"Mr. Davis explained that the tax-paying capacity of the District, as based upon the present assessed valuation of property, yields \$1,500,000 revenues, which is just about one-half of what is needed to meet current expenses.
"Mr. John T. Given said the apathy that

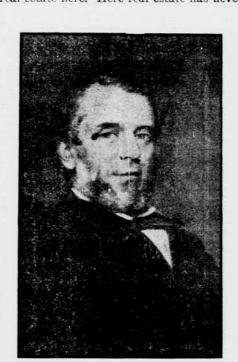
Beveridge, W. G. Metzerott and John T. Given. With their co-operation a meeting was held at the office of Fitch, Fox & Brown, when the subject of the formation danger, and he believed it would. To effect their common object they must be a cided upon. A meeting followed at the residence of Mr. Lewis J. Davis, when the outline of the public meeting to be called was agreed upon and the invitation to said meeting was framed and sent out, dated Washington, and the same may be said of October 9, 1877. The proceedings at that the county outside. (Applause.) Their meeting are found in the following account, work, then, is to map out what is to be the first quotation being an editorial in The
Evening Star of October 20, 1877:

"Everybody admits the urgent necessity
for united action by our citizens to secure

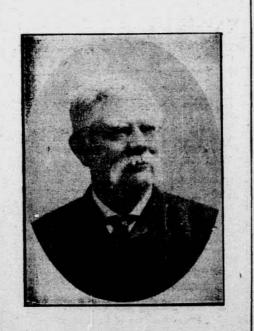


Mr. Edward Clark.

ward. Let them cultivate a little of the missionary spirit and all improve every oc-casion to impress upon Congress the importance of simple justice to a people impoverished by a stupendous debt imposed by agents of the general government. It was not his purpose nor his disposition to criti-cise the acts of individuals in the past; the present was enough for them to meet. The eyes of the community are upon them, and every member of these committees is expected to do his duty. Love of country and home is natural. As for himself, he loved the place of his birth, where he had spent the best days of his life and expected to end his career. The taxable property of the citizens of this District and that owned by the general government are nearly by the general government are nearly equal, and the duty of this committee to be for the present. They are reminded by this showing that their entire real estate in this District is mortgaged to the extent of over 25 per cent of its value. This condition of things has a most depressing effect upon real estate here. Here real estate has never



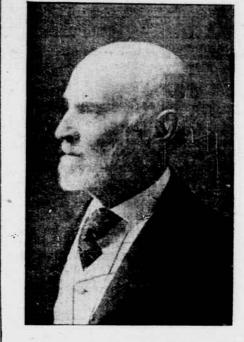
Mr. George W. Riggs. been inflated as it has been in Baltimore, Philadelphia, and in other large cities; but this terrible mortgage, like an incubus, a nightmare, is hanging over us, and they must look upon this state of affairs as business men, and the only thing which remains is to present this showing to Congress, which has exclusive jurisdiction, and ask that they take the responsibility of their own agents. He wished to avoid touching upon any of the partisan questions which had heretofore entered into our local af-fairs. Let the dead past be forgotten. They know that the debt is hanging like a cloud over them, and provision for its extinguishment has to be made. It was on that occasion for them to suggest and arrange what shall be done. Whatever is done, let the plans be well laid, and the attainment of the needed object be made a common cause. Whether this plan should be for a stated division of the expenses of the District, or for Congress to take the entire District into fts own charge; pay all expenditures and tax the people for reimbursement, or any other plan, is for them to consider; but



Mr. A. T. Britton.

whatever is adopted, let all pursue the same object with energy and perseverance. (Applause.) "The chair thought the proper course was to choose an executive committee to bring before Congress such matters of legisla-

essary to constitute the several committees should be left to the discretion of the chair. "The chair remarked that he thought the executive committee should be a large one, and composed of all classes of our people. He suggested that any one present who had names of proper persons to propose for



Mr. M. W. Galt,

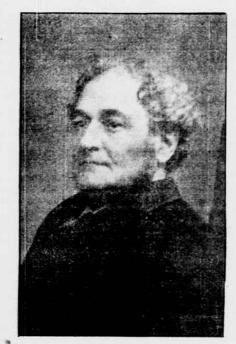
membership upon the general committee should hand them in, as it was desirable to have a full representative membership. He asked if it was the sense of the meeting that in the announcement of the commit-

tees the chair was privileged to go outside the general committee for selections. "The meeting dee ded affi matively. "The following committees, as far as filled out, were then announced: "Executive-W. W. Corcoran, George Taylor, Richard Wallach, S. J. Bowen, John F. Cook, S. V. Niles, C. B. Church, Dr. A. Y. P. Garnett, Thomas P. Morgan, Judge Mac-Arthur, Horatio King John Hitz, J. F. Ennis, J. L. Simms, A. S. Solomons, H. A. Willard, W. S. Cox, W. H. Ciaggett, L. A. Gobright, William Dixon, M. W. Galt, W. G. Metzerott, W. H. Philips, C. M. Mat-thews, Judge Edmunds, B. G. Lovejoy, A. T. Britton, R. C. Fox, W. M. Gat, Wm. Stickney, J. L. Barbour, Conway Robinson, S. H. Kauffmann, Judge Andrew Wylle; J. A. Baker, Wm. Ballantyne, W. D. Dav-idge, Joseph Shillington, W. M. Beveridge, J. G. Berret, G. A. Bohrer, J. M. Wilson, E. J. Middleton, jr., J. M. Van Buskirk, C. F. Peik, Gen. E. F. Beall. "Printing-S. H. Kaufmann, J. G. sudd. Richard Mohun, J. E. Fitch, W. H. Morri-

"Finance-Wm. Dixon, J. L. Barbour, B. "Finance—Wm. Dixon, J. L. Barbour, B. H. Warner, R. W. Downman, D. W. Middleton, jr., Horatio Browning.

"Press—A. Gobright, A. M. Clapp, John Lynch, J. C. Miller, Donn Piatt, D. C. Forney, I. N. Burritt, John Morris and W. H. Clarke.

"Public schools-B. G. Lovejoy, W. W.



Mr. J. M. Carlisle.

Curtis, J. O. Wilson, J. E. Thompson, James Wormley, B. F. Lloyd.

"Police—A. T. Britton, P. F. Bacon, John
Markriter, E. G. Davis, Dr. W. S. Thompson, George White and Thomas Somer-

"Fire department-Thomas P Morgan, G. M. Oyster, Wm. Dickson, Joseph Redfern, George R. Wilson, E. M. Gray and P. M. "Legislation-W. S. Cox, W. B. Webb, M. F. Morris, W. D. Davidge and Enoch Totten, Eugene Carusi, W. F. Mattingly, A.

G. Riddle.

"Improvement-M. W. Galt, J. C. Harkness, S. J. Bowen, J. Van Riswick, T. L. Hume, Dr. C. B. Purvis, Wright Reeves, H. A. Clark, W. M. Shuster, A. R. Shepherd, H. Clay Stewart, William R. Smith, W. D. Baldwin, Judge J. W. Wright, Hor-W. D. Baldwin, Judge J. W. Wright, Horace Capron, L. W. Kennedy, H. A. Willard, A. M. Smith, A. L. Barbour, James Goddard, Josiah Dent, C. C. Willard, Wm. G. Moore, Dr. C. B. Maxwell.

"Health department—Dr. A. Y. P. Garnett, Dr. Samuel Busey, Dr. J. M. Toner, S. A. H. Marks, Dr. John B. Blake, Dr. Peter Parker, Dr. Johnson Elliott, Dr. James E. Morgan, John Marbury, ir.

Morgan, John Marbury, fr. "Charities-Wm. Stickney, H. Semken, M. G. Emery, A. S. Solomond, John H. Cook, A. Pollock.
"Harbor improvement—Charles B. Church,



Mr. Samuel Norment.

Alexander Ray, Wm. J. Stephenson, Chas. Edmonston, Samuel Bacon, E. E. White, John Pettibone, John Marbury, jr. "Taxation-Wm. H. Clagett, Wm. Dixon, George W. Cochran, John F. Cock, G. Lansburg, Nathaniel Wilson, John W. Boteler, J. J. Johnson, Richard W. Tomp-

Boteler, J. J. Johnson, Richard W. Tomp-kins.

"District finances—W. W. Corcoran, Lewis J. Davis, H. M. Sweeney, Edward Temple, Daniel B. Clarke, Samuel Norment, J. C. G. Kennedy, J. H. Savile.

"County statistics—Conway Robinson, E. J. Middleton, jr., Dr. Christie, B. D. Carpenter, B. T. Swartz, J. P. Klingle, John Saul and E. C. Dean.

"On motion of General Beale that a com-

"On motion of General Beale that a com-"On motion of General Beale that a committee of five be appointed to wait upon Speaker Randall and urge that the committee of the House of Representatives in which District affairs are considered, be composed of none but members friendly disposed to the District, considerable discussion followed, developing a variety of views, but the motion was finally adopted, and the chair appointed General Beale, J. G. Berret, S. V. Niles and Horatio King."

trict.

"Judge Casey suggested that this committee be composed of fifteen members, and universally, and the committee reported in

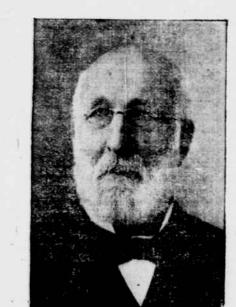
writing upon the several subjects commit ted to it, in part, as follows: To the Senate and House of Representa-

"The anomalous condition of affairs in the District of Columbia, affecting most in-juriously the fortunes and happiness of its citizens, has induced a voluntary association of taxpayers for the purpose of solicit-ing from the Congress of the United States such remedial and beneficial legislation as may be just and expedient. They appeal to Congress, because the federal Constitution has invested that body with supreme and exclusive legislative power in this Dis-trict—with the same absolute control and authority as it exercises over the national forts, arsenals, magazines and navy yards—and it is, therefore, to the beneficent exercise of this plenary authority alone that

"The plan of the city, as approved by Washington, is on a scale of unprecedented magnificence; with streets 90 to 160 feet in width, covering more than half its area; and at the period of its foundation, and for and at the period of its foundation, and for many years thereafter, it was without population or resources of any kind; the improvement of its streets and the building of sewers, bridges, etc., being the sole and exclusive care of the government and its agents. It was not until 1872 that the corporation of Washington and the Levy Court of the county were authorized to open and improve streets and roads.

"From the facts here stated it is apparent that Washington was projected by

parent that Washington was projected by its founders for a purely national city, to be governed and improved exclusively by Congress without regard in a legal sense to the voice or wishes of its citizens.
"And although the appropriations by Congress for general improvements in this District have never been at all commen-



Mr. Wm. Ballantyne.

surate with the princely grant under which the government now holds nearly a hun-dred millions of real estate, or with the grand design and expectations of the founders of the republic and its capital, as manifested by their early acts, they have at all times admitted the national obligations and responsibilities in this regard." See report of Senator Southard, 2d Feb-

See report of Senator Brown, 15th May. report of House committee on D. C. 13th May, 1872.
See report of House committee on judiclary, 1st June, 1874.
See report of joint committee of two houses. 7th December, 1874.

See report of joint committee of two houses, 1876. It would take too much space to quote more largely from this and other reports made by the subcommittees to the committee of one hundred, able and exhaustive they are. They may be found printed in full in the pamphlets published at that time

by the committees. The Organic Act.

The following is part of the text of the "Bill providing for the permanent government by the District, introduced in the House of Representatives, H. R. 3259."

"The annual estimates of the District of



Mr. H. A. Willard.

Columbia shall be transmitted to Congress by the Commissioners of the District of Columbia at the same time that the regular annual estimates for expenses of the government are submitted by the Secretary of the Treasury, and with his action on the same to be printed in the general book of

estimates. "The Secretary of the Treasury shall carefully consider all estimates submitted to him as above provided, and shall approve, disapprove or suggest such changes in the same, or any item thereof, as he may think the public interest demands; and after he shall have considered and passed upon such estimates submitted to him, he shall cause to be made a statement of the amount approved by him and the fund or purpose to which each item belongs, which the statement shall be certified by him and statement shall be certified by him, and delivered, together with the estimates as originally submitted, to the Commissioners of the District of Columbia, who shall transmit the same to Congress.

"To the extent to which Congress shall approve of said estimates, Congress shall appropriate the amount of 50 per centum thereof, and the remaining 50 per centum of such approved estimates shall be levied and assessed upon the taxable property and privileges in said District other than the property of the United States and of the property of the United States and of the District of Columbia, and all proceedings in District of Columbia, and all proceedings in the assessing, equalizing and levying of said taxes, the collection thereof, the listing return and penalty for taxes in arrears, the advertising for sale and the sale of property for delinquent taxes, the redemption thereof, the proceedings to enforce the lien upon unredeemed property, and every other act and thing now required to be done in the premises, shall be done and performed at the time and in the manner now provided by law, except in so far as is otherwise provided by this act."

Credit Due the Experimental Govern-

Credit Due the Experimental Government.

The passage of this bill and the assumption by the general government of one-half of the expenses of the District afforded immediate relief-the amount collected for the year 1878 was about \$3,000,000, one-half derived from taxation and one-half appropriated from the treasury of the United States. This act has now been in force for twenty-four years; the debt of the District has been reduced about \$5,000,000 by the operation of the sinking fund, and the ingreasing expenditure of the local governcomposed of none but members friendly disposed to the District, considerable discussion followed, developing a variety of views, but the motion was finally adopted, and the chair appointed General Beale, J. G. Berret. S. V. Niles and Horatio King."

The Statement to Congress.

The committee appointed at the meeting at Wilhard's Hall went to work at once with great seal and industry; the memoria or netition was signed by our people almost universally, and the committee reported in the committee reported in the committee of the local government fully met. Much criticism was evoked at the revolutionary acts of the experimental government of 1871-1874, but it is generally conceded now that to the bond assumption of authority exercised by the board of public works, to the unparalleled and courage of its executive, the committee reported in the capital city and as a confidence of coal pride and congrutulation.